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VALLEY

Thesis

1950

City planning
212

A REPORT ON EXISTING CONDITIONS.

MILL VALLEY

1950

A REPORT ON THE PROBLEMS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS
IN THE MILL VALLEY AREA, MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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GRADUATE STUDENT

PROBLEM

DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

APRIL 22, 1950

University of California
Department of City and
Regional Planning

April 22, 1950

To the Citizens of Mill Valley:

This report represents the results of a four week survey made by students in the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley. The survey was made as part of the requirements for the course City Planning 212, one of the core courses in the City Planning program.

The report, entitled "MILL VALLEY - 1950" treats the city that exists today in what is hoped is an objective manner. A later report will attempt to supply a five year development plan to guide the physical growth of the city.

The report has been divided into three major sections for the convenience of the reader. They are: "The Region and the Community", "Mill Valley Problems", and an Appendix.

Respectfully Submitted

Graduate Students:

J. W. Keilty
J. W. Lubin
T. K. Ware, Jr.
Y. B. Shinoda - Chairman

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Respectfully Submitted

Graduate Students:

J. W. Kelly
J. W. Jahn
T. E. Wenzel, Jr.
Y. B. Shinde - Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The group wishes to thank sincerely the many people who made it possible for us to obtain the information contained in this report. Without their fine cooperation and aid we would have been sorely handicaped. We wish especially to extend our thanks to Mr. George Alassa, acting City Manager and City Clerk, for facilitating the introduction of the group to these residents and officials of Mill Valley and Marin County. A complete list of those to whom we are grateful appears in the appendix.

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INTRODUCTION

The obvious things about Mill Valley are all there to see and mostly they are beautiful things. They are Mt. Tamalpais, its blue eye-filling size serving the town as backdrop; the darkness of the green slopes punctured by charming, country-house roof tops, the compactness and bustle of the town center; the brooks and trees, everywhere breaking into light and shade. Won by such an abundance of charm, it is no small wonder that many Mill Valley residents hope for no change in this environment, and, along with at least one, are willing to complain half-humourously of the deer stalking roses in the garden.

A town that invites rose-fancying deer would seem to have a country gentility and a closeness to natural things not often found in the immediate neighborhood of a great city, and, as such, this atmosphere is worth preserving. But not everyone in Mill Valley is of the opinion that there should be no change in his city, and, since changes are bound to occur, the important thing is to have every Mill Valley resident consider how this change may best be accomplished without sacrificing either beauty or liveability.

Our study is concerned entirely with the existing city. A later study will suggest possible answers to how change is to be managed and made a friend. But one thing should be made clear, if Mill Valley is to continue to function as a pleasant and convenient living place it cannot hope merely that time will stop. The people of Mill Valley are, at this moment, faced with certain problems regarding their city. They are, unlike the hills and trees, fairly small; bad streets, poor transportation, the need for new sources of revenue to maintain what is and to carry on improvements. These problems are, however, growing ones. If they grow too large, the hills and the trees may be lost to view, to use, to pleasure.

The area included in our study is not limited to the city limits of Mill Valley, but include the neighboring communities of Alto, Homestead Valley, Almonte, and Tamalpais Valley. These areas along with Mill Valley form a unit similar in character and facing some of the same problems. From an economic standpoint they are closely related and many of their public and private services are administered out of Mill Valley. For this reason the author's of this report felt justified in including them in their survey.



PLATE
1
SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA

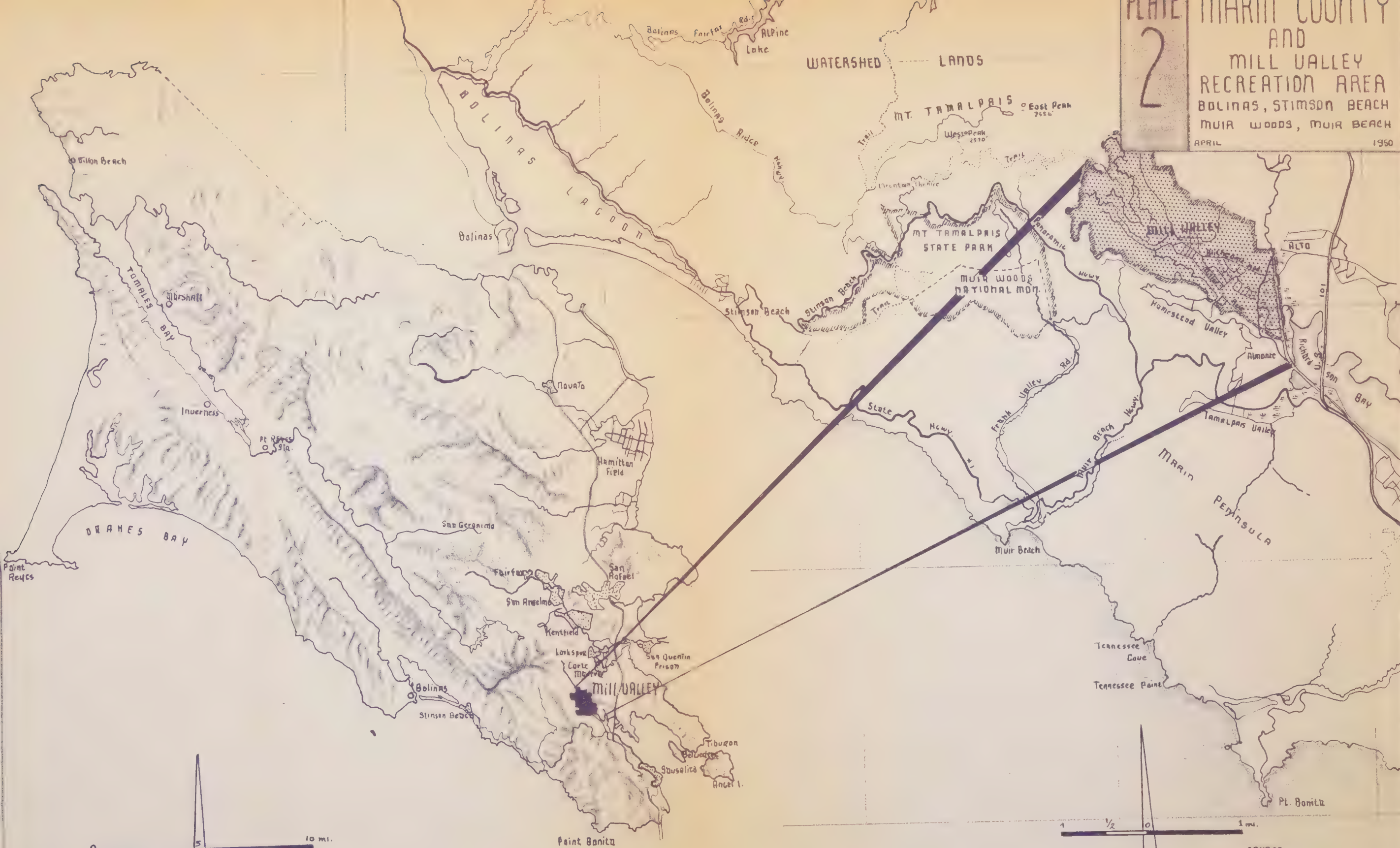
SOURCE:
AERONAUTICAL CHART, U.S.
COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY
JULY 1948

PLATE MARIN COUNTY AND MILL VALLEY RECREATION AREA

2

BOLINAS, STIMSON BEACH
MUIR WOODS, MUIR BEACH

APRIL 1950



Source:
Aeronautical Chart
U. S. Coast and Geodetic
Survey - July 1948

SOURCE:
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
TACTICAL MAP
1941

THE REGION AND THE COMMUNITY

In the last decade, the population of California has increased by more than 3 million and it is estimated that by 1960 it will increase another 5 million to a total of 14 million people. In 1940 the nine counties surrounding San Francisco Bay had a combined population of 1,734,308. An estimate for the 1950 total for this same area is 2,704,000. Marin County along with the rest of the Bay Area, has felt the pressure of this increase, expanding from 52,807 in 1940 to an estimated 90,000 for 1950.

This great increase in the population of the Bay Area and Marin County has made urban congestion far more acute than it was before the war. It has brought with it an urgent need for permanent public recreation areas and residential districts in outlying parts of the urban area, which are suitable for summer or week-end homes as well as houses for that part of the population which does not have to live near the existing centers of employment.

Marin County, situated as it is in relation to the rest of the Bay Area, and possessing a vast potential in respect to the above needs, has attained increasing importance to the metropolitan area. Since 1940, Marin County has had a 55% increase in population while the rest of the Bay Area increased 50%. It is reasonable to assume that the trend will continue the same for some time.

Marin County occupies 521 square miles or 333,440 acres of which 95% was privately owned in 1940. Ten years later this figure had dropped to 84% with the balance held by public parks, schools and the like. Most of the county is relatively undeveloped with most of the urban area being concentrated in the south-east portion. In general, the countryside is characterized by rolling hills, numerous streams, small valleys, and large densely wooded areas. It is completely surrounded by water with the exception of 10 miles of the northern boundary, giving 115 miles of shoreline if Tomales Bay is included. A range of hills and mountains traverses the county from the southern tip to the northern boundary varying in height from 800 to 2600 feet.

Marin's biggest assets are the quality and quantity of recreation and residential facilities it has. Originally populated by dairy farmers, soon summer and weekend residents arrived, and with better transportation permanent settlers came. With completion of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937, Marin truly became "a bedroom of San Francisco."

The County's recreation resources are unlimited. Surrounded by water as it is, there are vast expanses of beaches suitable for bathing, fishing, boating and the like. There is a network of riding and hiking trails linked with a state-wide system. There are two major parks of state and national importance as well as numerous smaller city and county parks liberally spotted throughout the county.

Mt. Tamalpais State Park covers a large area of scenic beauty. From the East Peak, which has been developed as a scenic outlook, one can see the entire interior valley between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, and Mt. Shasta on the north and the Tehachapis to the south.

Muir Woods National Monument, a 424 acre park of virgin redwoods was bought by Senator William Kent and deeded to the Nation in 1908 to

commemorate John Muir, the noted naturalist. Some of the redwood giants reach 250 feet in height and 17 feet in diameter. Some of the better known trees such as the Bridge Tree, the Kent Fir, the Altim Redwood, and the Gifford Pinchot Redwood Cathedral Grove provide major spots of interest in the park.

climate

The climate of Marin County is tempered by the fact that a range of hills and mountains divide it roughly in half into eastern and western sections. On the western or Pacific coast side, there is a good deal of fog and the climate is generally cool. On the eastern side, where Mill Valley is situated, we find a semi-mediterranean climate that is mild and uniform the year round.

The only recorded figures obtainable are from the U.S. Weather Station at Kentfield (elev. 65 ft.). At this point the average temperatures for the last 38 years are as follows: The mean daily maximum is 70.6 degrees Fahrenheit and the mean daily minimum 43.2 giving a mean daily temperature of 56.8 degrees.

The precipitation figures measured for the past 50 years indicate negligible snowfall and an average annual precipitation of 48.12 inches. Most of this (35.22 inches) comes during the months of December through March, while during the period of June through August, the total is 0.42 inches. The prevailing winds are westerly with occasional northwest winds.

The only figure obtainable for Mill Valley is the average rainfall for the last 9 years, being 30.96 inches. This shows a great drop from the Kentfield figure possibly due to the fact that Kentfield is further inland. We have assumed that the other data is relatively the same since the cities are in adjoining valleys and at roughly the same elevation (Kentfield 65 feet - Mill Valley 57 feet).

terrain

On three sides, north, west, and south, Mill Valley is hemmed about by hills. Three small valleys, the beds of as many creeks, join close to the present town center and form the larger, relatively flat south-eastern area of the town, bounded southwest and northeast by Miller and Blythdale Avenues. This triangle ends at the marshes lying between the town and Richardson's Bay. Close to the extreme southeasterly mouth of the valley the Homestead Valley runs a course roughly due west into the hills and lies south of the town center. Separated from Homestead by a ridge running southeast to Richardson's Bay is Tamalpais Valley.

In all the Mill Valley area is quite hilly and heavily wooded. The whole

landscape is dominated by the large mass of Mt. Tamalpais in the west.

history

Mill Valley received its initial impetus in 1834, when John J. Reed, an Irish sailor, received a grant of a square league of land in what is now Marin County, from the Mexican governor Jose Figueroa. He received this Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio, "cut timber for the Presidio") as a dowry when he married the daughter of Yerba Buena's Presidio commandante. The general area encompassed includes what is now known as the Tiburon peninsula and everything east of the creek now known as Widow Reed Creek, up to a point which now corresponds to the northern limits of Mill Valley. The western half of Southern Marin County was granted in recognition of good citizenship to Captain William Antonio Richardson, a trans-bay ferry operator and harbor pilot. This was called the Rancho Saucelito and was granted in 1835. The boundaries of the Rancho follow Widow Reed Creek, the crest of Mt. Tamalpais and thence westward to the Pacific Ocean. Subsequently the Richardson Rancho was taken over for taxes by the San Francisco Savings Union which later sold the northern part to the Tamalpais Land and Water Company. This company was more interested in water than in land. The southern section of the Rancho went to the Saucelito Land and Title Company and became part of the city of Saucelito. The Tamalpais Land and Title Company put their property on sale through the Marin City Abstract Company in 1890. At this time only the western side of the creek was sold, having been subdivided into lots varying from 25 X 130 feet to 10 acre villa sites. After much publicity, a public auction was held on Decoration Day 1890, to sell rural homesites in Eastland and Millwood as Mill Valley was then called.

The developers had undertaken the construction of a complete system of roads and the furnishing through pipes of an ample supply of pure water. Shortly, the community became a summer resort town for people from San Francisco, having a winter population of only 100 people. Transportation to San Francisco was convenient via the North Pacific Coast Railroad which ran frequent train. The monthly commutation rate was \$4.00 and the trip to the city took 50 minutes.

By 1900, the population had increased to 900 and the residents petitioned to become incorporated with the power to tax themselves to care for local needs. The County Board of Supervisors called a special election at which a majority of the voters favored incorporation. It is interesting to note that many people were prevented from voting by a peculiar accident. A man fell overboard from the trans-bay ferry, causing it to delay in order to retrieve him. As a consequence of the delay, many voters arrived after the polls had closed. It is questionable how this would have affected the outcome. At any rate the town became incorporated on September 1, 1900, a move favored by the Tamalpais Land and Water Company who wished more remuneration for the sewer and water services they were providing. Eastland became a 6th class city with 5 councilmen, an elected clerk and treasurer and ex-officio assessor to govern it according

to specific laws and procedures set up by the Municipal Corporation Act (1883). Among the first official acts of this group was the passage of a resolution changing the name from Eastland to Mill Valley. Also at this meeting, Old Mill Park, containing 6 acres and the relic of the historical mill which gave the city its name, was deeded to the city by an agent of the Tamalpais Land and Water Company together with Cascade Park.

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire the city grew rapidly and soon had a population of 3500. In 1940 it had increased to 4847 and at the present time is estimated at approximately 8500. The city's boundaries remained the same until 25 years after incorporation, at which time the Bolsa and Blythedale tracts were annexed. Since that time the boundaries have changed many times, until in 1948 the city covered 12 square miles.

Some of the early businesses that were established in the city are as follows: The Mill Valley Record, founded in 1901, was later combined with the "Enterprise" by J. Fred Schlingman and still is known as the "Record". The Suey Key Market is the oldest business in the city closely followed by the Dowd Delivery and Express Company. Schlingman also started the first bank and built the present building, which was taken over by the Bank of America in 1928. The Outdoor Art Club was started early in the city's history by Mrs. Lowell White, who has been very active in civic betterment. Among other things, she is credited with getting Delores Boulevard paved and landscaped, as well as getting a national bill to save the redwoods.

recreation

Mill Valley has acquired by gift or purchase approximately 100 acres of parklands. Much of the land on the southern slope of the valley is very steep, heavily wooded and divided into many separate parcels. Approximately 63 acres have been developed in varying degrees into parks and playgrounds. Boyle Park containing 7 partially developed acres includes a turfed baseball park and grandstand, 3 tennis courts equipped with lights for night playing, handball courts, a tot lot and a picnic area. Old Mill Park containing 6 acres is the site of the historic mill which gave the city its name. It is equipped with a comfort station, play equipment, wading pool, barbecue pits and tables and benches for picnics. Cascade park at the head of Throckmorton Avenue is a scenic picnic area. From this area a number of hiking trails take off for Muir Woods and Tamalpais State Park and their extensive system of hiking trails and campsites.

Freeman, Sycamore and Molino neighborhood playgrounds contain play equipment; Freeman being paved. Because use is intensive these playgrounds should be further developed with paving, equipment and plant materials. The 42 acre Municipal Golf Course contains 9 holes as well as barbecue and picnic facilities. Adjoining the course is an archery range.

Through the joint efforts of the City Recreation Commission and the school district, a two months summer recreational program has been developed. The facilities of Tamalpais Park, Old Mill Schools and Boyle Park will be utilized in the program for the 3 age groups; 5-9, 9-13, 13-17, under the supervision of a director and 5 assistants. The program consists of supervised physical education and athletics, arts and crafts, and drama. The city is providing \$1200, the school district \$550 and the P.T.A. \$200 for the employment of personnel. A registration fee of \$.50 will be charged.

As Mill Valley's population has gradually increased and become more youthful the use of and the need for a program of recreation has become greater. Present playground facilities are only partially developed and should be further improved in order to afford the people the maximum benefits from what they already have.

MILL VALLEY PROBLEMS

The vibrancy of Mill Valley is readily felt by anyone who is fortunate enough to spend any time in the city. It is alive, it is growing. But the growth is uneven and halting. Like an inexperienced traveler, Mill Valley expends much energy in trying to find a direction in which to go. The goal is known, the effort is there, but the effort is without direction.

Everyone in the community is interested in securing the best life possible for the inhabitants. But beyond this point there is no unity of purpose. Strip commercial development on the sides of the entering road offer a harsh contrast to the welcome quiet and shade of much of the residential area. Other attempts to integrate commercial areas harmoniously with the character of the town have been wayward and haphazard.

In commercial areas we see merchants concentrating their appeal to "the hill", ignoring the changes in population composition that has occurred during and after the war. Part of Mill Valley is satisfied with the leisurely life; it would rather not have any further increase in population; it is satisfied with the business its stores are doing. But not everyone feels that way. New comers to the Valley possess a more dynamic outlook and move at a faster pace. There are occasional resentments and misunderstandings. The town is slowly dividing against itself, and as more changes occur the differences are bound to grow.

In this amorphous situation, eyes turn to the city hall as a source of information and direction. Mill Valley is fortunate. The City Hall has been supplying a lot of the answers, but the administration is limited. Proper answers take time, money, and personnel. Mill Valley has fallen behind in time; money and personnel are lacking. It is no wonder then, that some answers are not forthcoming.

Living a comfortable life in pleasant surroundings, one is apt to forget that civic responsibilities require constant attention and care on the part of everyone. Civic groups, while functioning, don't have the facts they should have. They depend on city hall where staff, facilities, and funds are severely burdened by the growing needs of the community. Commercial groups have meetings with but a handful of members attending.

sewage disposal - another problem

Mill Valley's sewage disposal system designed for a bygone day, is incapable of adequately meeting today's needs. With parts of the system forty to fifty years old, it is to be expected that tree roots should break through the deteriorating pipes. Through the years, untreated sewage has been pumped into Richardson Bay by a plant operating at capacity. Twice this year the low lying residential areas along Sycamore Street have been flooded during the heavy rains due to inadequate

drains, overflowing creeks and high tides. Higher creek banks and a system of check valves which have been installed are but a temporary answer to the serious health problem created by the backing up of sewage during flood conditions.

A primary sewage treatment plant adjacent to the present pumping plant, which is slated for construction this summer, will stop the dumping of raw sewage into the Bay. Capable of servicing a population of 10,000, it could be enlarged to serve an additional 8,000 people.

While the addition of a sewage plant answers part of the problem, the network of antique pipes feeding the plant remains a serious liability to an efficiently functioning gathering system.

Sewage conditions are similarly a cause for complaint in the neighboring unincorporated areas of Alto, Tamalpais Valley and Almonte. The area is served by individual or community septic tank systems. The non-absorptive quality of the clay base results in frequent seepage. Steps are being taken to correct this condition. Last September Almonte residents voted to create a sanitary district which would eventually utilize the Mill Valley disposal plant. In March of this year a group of Alto citizens proposed to establish an Alto Sanitary District to include both the Alto Community and the Bay View Terrace Area on the other side of U. S. Highway 101. Consideration is being given to possible integration of this system with that existing in Mill Valley.

fire protection and the water supply

The supply of water for fire protection has proved of some concern to many. Water hydrants are rented from the water district, but the present system is inadequate to meet present demands. This is particularly true in the late afternoons of the summer when general water consumption is highest. At such times certain areas find themselves completely without water. Sections of Ethel Avenue and the higher areas in the vicinity of Hillside Avenue are chronic sufferers in this respect.

Storage tanks and high level pipe lines, authorized in 1951 by last November's passage of a \$4,000,000 Marin Municipal Water District Bond Issue, is expected to alleviate this critical situation existing in the Mill Valley area.

PLATE MILL VALLEY
3
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP AND
MAJOR THOROUGHFARES
50 FOOT CONTOUR INTERVALS
SOURCE: CORPS OF ENGINEERS TACTICAL
MAP AND MARIN CO. PLANNING DEPT.



PLATEMILL VALLEY
4
LAND USE
SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY &
MARIN COUNTY PLANNING DEPT.

LEGEND

- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTIPLE DWELLING
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL (SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, ETC.)
- PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS



land use and circulation - major thoroughfare pattern

The major thoroughfares for the study area are to be seen on plate three. As is generally the case, these thoroughfares seem to separate segments of the city and act as boundaries of fairly distinct areas. Using the West Blithedale, Miller Ave. line as one axis, and Buena Vista, Throckmorton Aves. as the other, the city is divided into four sections approximately equal in size and distinct in character.

Access roads

Mill Valley is fortunate in not having a major highway passing through its center. Access is obtained from U.S. Highway 101, either from East Blithedale or Miller Aves. Each terminates in the compact commercial center, the heart and center of the community. Both streets wind gently, providing the visitor with an introduction to the city vastly preferable to the mainline "strip" of the typical highway town with its clutter of cheap commercial and industrial uses.

But both in the case of Blithedale Ave and Miller Ave., the full potentialities of these welcoming arms have not been exploited. This is especially true in the case of Miller Ave., skirting the green hung bluffs to the southwest. A badly planned commercial strip in the vicinity of Locust Ave., if allowed to develop in the present manner, will rob the present entrance of its charm. A well planned commercial center in the area would have both social and economic advantages. Miller Ave., at present, is divided by a virtually unused railroad track.

Set back as it is from the highway, Mill Valley has but two major routes of ingress and egress; proper development of these two roads should be a major civic concern.

neighborhoods and town center

East Blithedale and Miller Aves. encompass a recently built up residential area. The homes in this area primarily are one story cottages of a type to be found all over the Bay Area. From the standpoint of typical subdividing methods, the neighborhoods benefit from an irregular street pattern and comparatively spacious lots. However, certain signs of deterioration are already noticeable.

The roads, quite adequate in width, show the scarred and rough edges, the sunken patches that accompany poor maintenance. Sidewalks are discontinuous, and their sudden spurts and stops are inconvenient and disturbing to the eye. Landscaping and tree-planting, outside of spasmodic private efforts, are generally missing. Potentially the area is a pleasant neighborhood, but, unless continuing improvements are made, subsequent development will not meet the needs of either the local residents or of the whole community; and later attempts at improvement may well prove costly.

The homes between Buena Vista and East Blithedale Aves. are somewhat larger and more expensive. Circulation is much poorer, a fact largely dictated by the topography. The poor condition of the pavements is, however, a civic problem.

Centered on a square opposite the Grayhound Station, the central business district is characterized by its compactness and a diversity of shops and services. Parking meters in this area have been recently installed on a conditional basis. As this report is being written, their final disposition is being decided. Many of the central business district merchants are opposed to them on the grounds that they have curtailed business. Traffic flow does not, at this time, present a serious obstacle to the shopper.

To the North and East of the town center lies some of the town's most desirable residential areas. Along the sides of Cascade Valley and on the wooded hillsides are the spacious homes on spacious if steeply pitched grounds commanding views of Valley and Bay that typify the Mill Valley manner of living. Even the more modest homes are pleasantly situated in natural surroundings.

The roads in this area follow the contours, with road building proceeding from immediate need to immediate need. Point to point circulation is perhaps necessarily round-about. The roads in most cases are tiny, varying from one lane to a lane and a half in width. In addition to the difficulties of layout design, the condition of the roads is a major concern. Upon leaving the central business area, paving starts and stops, gutters appear and disappear, sidewalks jump from one side of the road to the other - all mute evidence of a haphazard growth and lack of planning. Street surfacing has been largely a matter of guess work and individual pressures. In some cases, surfacing has been done in response to pressure on locations where the city had no title to the land.

Schools

The entire study area is served by the same elementary and high school districts. There are four schools in the former district and one in the latter. All schools are overcrowded. With an average classroom size of 35 pupils, the elementary schools, while no longer maintaining double sessions as in the past, still present a most serious problem. Fourteen classrooms have been constructed in the last two years and a four room school on the Boyes Ranch in Tamalpais Valley has been proposed for construction in the coming year. Enlargement of Alto School and a new school at Strawberry Point, across U.S. Highway 101, with the establishment of a junior high school would provide additional needed facilities. To maintain even the overcrowded average figure of 35 pupils per classroom would require 16 new classrooms by 1956 to accommodate the expected increase of 568 pupils over the present attendance of 1489.

LEGEND

-  SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (and unclassified)
-  LIMITED AGRICULTURAL
-  SUBURBAN AGRICULTURAL
-  MULTIPLE DWELLING
-  COMMERCIAL
-  Public Lands

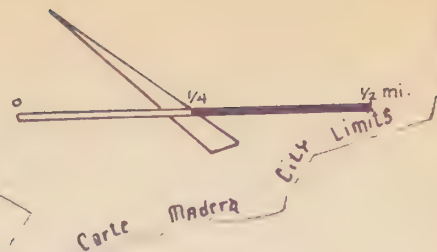
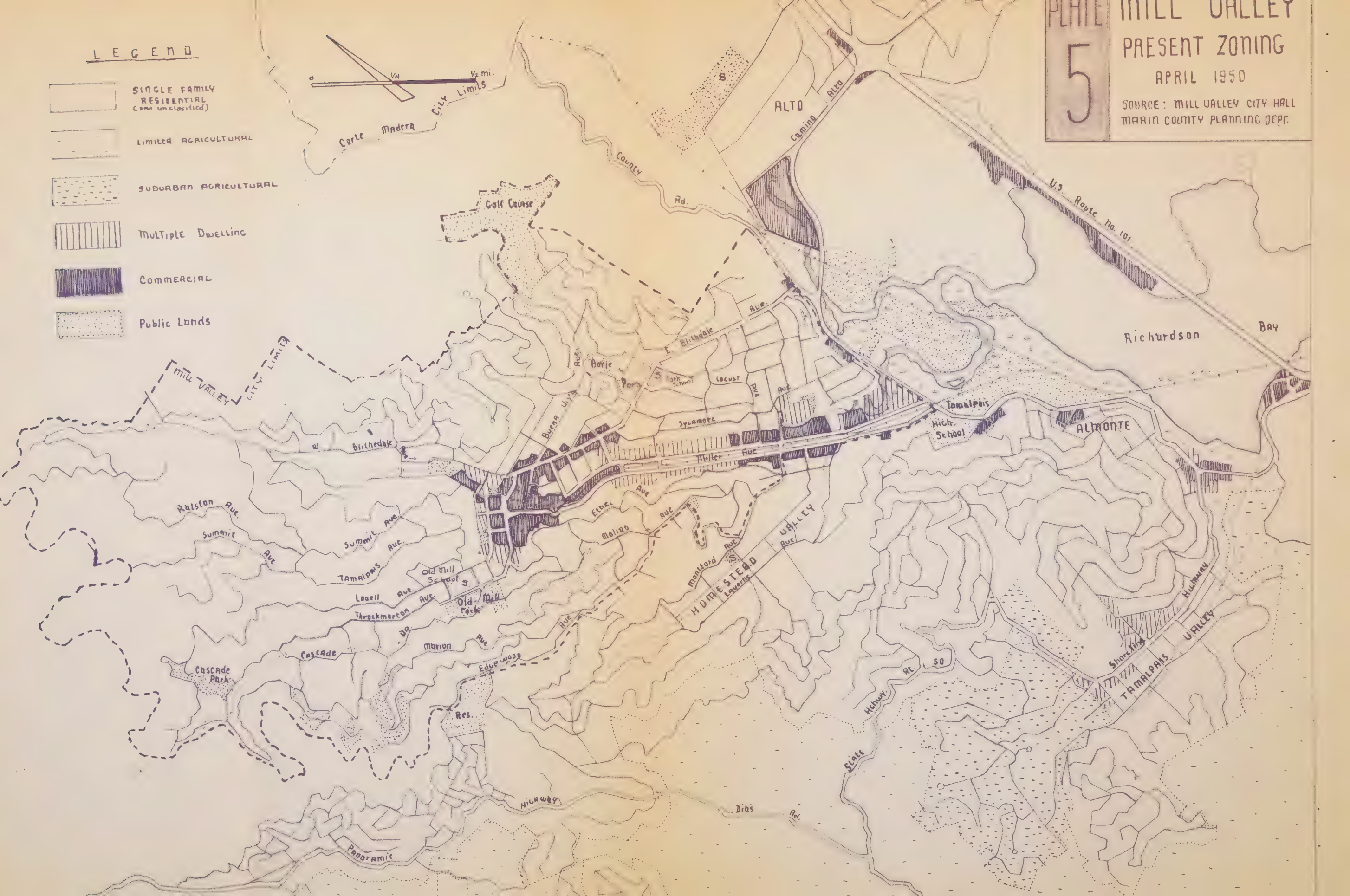


PLATE MILL VALLEY
 5
 PRESENT ZONING
 APRIL 1950
 SOURCE: MILL VALLEY CITY HALL
 MARIN COUNTY PLANNING DEPT.



Playground space is sufficient at the Old Mill and Alto Schools, but inadequate at the Tamalpais Park and Homestead Valley Schools. The quality of the facilities supplied by the older schools could be improved. When a blackboard collapses as someone writes on it, as happened in the Old Mill School, it is time to invest a little money in equipment.

With the exception of the Alto School, the elementary schools are located on property directly abutting major streets. The High School is even more unfortunately located. The County Road providing access to Mill Valley from the highway passes through the middle of the campus. Split down the middle physically, passage from one building to another is hazardous and a sense of unity is lost to the school. The proposed acquisition of the railroad roadbed as the site of a new road will alleviate this situation if acted upon.

The High School, containing 97 rooms, was designed for 1300 students, and with its present enrollment of 1640 students is also overcrowded. Classes, on staggered shifts at 7:55 AM to 2:25 PM and 8:55 AM to 3:25 PM, are conducted by a staff of 24 teachers. An evening adult education program in arts and crafts, commercial and machine shop courses is offered to 918 adults. Some 60 - 65% of the graduates of the school continue their education at the college level.

An increase of 1426 high school pupils by 1956 is expected. The recent (February 1, 1950) passage of a \$2,045,000 bond issue for the construction of a two story high school on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard between San Anselmo and Fairfax is a partial answer to the problem. Occupying a twenty acre site, with adequate athletic and recreational facilities, the building will accommodate 1000 students. It is scheduled for completion next year. In two years it will be filled to capacity. Some expression of opposition as regards the location of the new school was voiced by Mill Valley residents.

planning

Mill Valley has a planning commission, but it is handicapped by its limited budget of \$600, and by its lack of a regular planning staff. Fortunately, the city's last city manager was a former city planner. He was able, taking time from his administrative duties, to begin the task of gathering the vast amount of basic information necessary to guide the city's growth in an intelligent manner. Whether this program is to be carried forward will depend greatly on citizen interest in planning problems and on the realization by all members of the community that planning, to be effective, must be long range and comprehensive in scope.

commercial aspects

More than physical distance separates the two commercial areas. They are widely divergent in outlook, with the Miller-Locust center the more aggressive of the pair in building customer patronage.

Merchants in the Central Business District are generally not newcomers. Many were there before the recent influx of population during the war. Businesses, whose only customers at one time were on "the hill", still think in terms of the "hill" trade. Newspaper advertising, when it is used, is usually placed in the San Rafael Independent, which has a circulation of more than 1000 in the area, largely among the "hill" people.

Central Business District Businessmen are not rated very highly as merchandizers, according to some Mill Valley sources. Merchandize arrangement, window displays, and the amount and kind of advertising all show room for improvement. The bargain hunting buyer is seldom attracted to the area by sales of merchandize. At present few district merchants actively participate in any of the commercial organizations.

Miller Avenue merchants, perhaps because they are newer in the area and are in the process of establishing themselves, show a more aggressive spirit. Their approach has been one of moving large volumes of merchandize, recognizing that a majority of today's population is not of the upper economic level. Some 60% of these merchants are regular advertisers in the Mill Valley Record. The Record has a circulation of more than 3000, and with its Shopper and the Southern Marin Messenger, reaches more than 78% of the homes in Southern Marin. (This service is used by only 20% of the merchants in Mill Valley).

Miller Avenue Merchants have their own association with 51 members, all of whom actively participate in the organization. They have been notably effective in promoting their own interests.

From a commercial as well as an aesthetic standpoint, the strip development of the Miller-Locust business center is undesirable. Maximum convenience for the shopper is not achieved by having the shops strung out on both sides of this heavily trafficked street.

While the area zoned for commercial uses is far too great for present needs, present commercial development is commensurate to the population. It is not, however, fully realizing its market potential. It is estimated that a family in Mill Valley spends an average of \$1000.00 a year in San Francisco. Some of this business, undoubtedly, could be transacted in Mill Valley. During the Christmas season dollar volume of business will double in Mill Valley when the weather discourages shopping trips to San Francisco. One woman reports seeing 45 other Mill Valley women shopping in Macy's, San Francisco, in one day.

Among other shopping facilities, some Mill Valley residents would like to see a supermarket, a good furniture store selling medium priced furniture, and a Penny and/or a Sears store established in the community. This reflects the population shift which has taken place in the recent history of the city, and indicates the type of service not being supplied today. Unless readjustments are made by Mill Valley merchants, this type of business (i.e. low and middle income home furnishings, etc.) will continue to go out of the city.

Information on the gross value of sales in the city would have been valuable in assessing business trends, but they were not released for our study.

the newspaper

In July 1945, Mr. Stanley Wilson assumed control of the Mill Valley Record. In September of that year, Mr. William Cass joined the staff. Under their direction the newspaper has changed over from a weekly to a semi-weekly publication schedule with a Tuesday and Friday press. The change took place in April of 1947. Since then a third man has joined the staff, and at present the newspaper is seeking another staff addition.

The management is aggressively developing the newspaper and its business. The same plant publishes, in addition to the Record, the Southern Marin Messenger, and a "Shopper". The Messenger, with a circulation of 1500, covers Sausalito, Marin City, Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Belvedere, and Tiburon. The "Shopper", with a circulation 1200, reproduces the advertising in the Record and Messenger. These three publications have a combined circulation of more than 5000 with no duplication of service. As was noted previously, only 20% of the merchants in Mill Valley make use of their local newspaper. The newspaper is hoping to participate in the \$90,000 worth of job printing in Southern Marin County now going to San Francisco.

recreational assets

At one time Mill Valley was the cynosure of many hikers using the trails into the neighboring hills and woods. The city also served as the terminus of the railroad that scaled the sides of Mt. Tamalpais. Hiking is apparently no longer a popular diversion and means of relaxation, for the streams of hikers have dwindled, and the railroad is no longer in existence. The city's 9 hole golf course seems, however, to have attracted considerable outside patronage and is at present operating at a profit.

building activity

To accomodate its increased populations, the city has been building. Construction reached a peak in 1947 and has been declining since then - although it is still far above pre-war levels.

Prices for new houses, although high, are not exorbitant, while old houses have an inflated value. There is a housing shortage in the community which is expected to last for the next two years. New private developments are under way or are projected for Alto, Strawberry Point, Tamalpais Valley and Tiburon. Continuing demand is expected to prevent any serious decline in the building trades for the next 8 - 10 years.

transportation

With 75 - 80% of their income earned in San Francisco, Mill Valley residents are properly concerned with the problem of transportation. With the exception of persons using private vehicles, the community is dependent upon the Pacific Greyhound Bus Lines for transportation to San Francisco and other neighboring areas. The feeling of dissatisfaction that prevails among many residents in regard to the Greyhound service has its counterpart in the company's outlook. Mr. F.C. Fiaily, Vice President of the company has been quoted as saying, "The sooner we get out the better."

Some 43 buses are needed to handle the morning exodus of commuters to San Francisco. In all, there are 43 scheduled departure times from Mill Valley, the earliest leaving at 5:27 AM and the last at 2:35 AM. The company feels that its capital outlay is too large to accommodate a morning and evening rush, and desires more revenue from the route. On December 22, 1949 the company requested increases in commuter rates for Mill Valley residents from the present \$8.00 for a 30 day ride book to \$15.00 for the same number of rides. This represents an increase of almost 90%.

Previous discontinuance of the North Western Pacific Railroad line means that the city would be without mass transit if the Greyhound Line were to discontinue its services.

population characteristics

Mill Valley is physically one community. But within this community there are two distinct groups: the hill people and the new comers to the Valley. Between these two groups there exists a schism in thought and a difference in what they desire for the city. Between them lies the future of Mill Valley.

The older inhabitants enjoy, on the whole, a higher income than that of the new comers. They are closely attached to their rural-suburban way of living, a country life not too far removed from the metropolis where they work. They feel deeply any threat to this type of living.

The new group is a younger group, many of them veterans. Their homes have veteran exemptions. Their incomes are lower than that of the hill group. It is interesting to note that while in 1940, 60% of the city had incomes of \$7000 or more, this group only makes up 40% of the population today. The new comers make up the difference.

Outlets for individual expression are supplied by the area's 8 churches and 38 clubs and organizations. These organizations, in many respects, provide a common ground for the airing of Mill Valley's disparate interests. But differences in outlook have proven major stumbling blocks for even Mill Valley's most active group, the local legion post. The Outdoor Art Club, founded by civic leader, Mrs. Lovell White, is one of the oldest and

most influential of the groups in the area. The League of Women Voters has taken upon itself the task of informing the citizens of the governmental and administrative workings of their community through its informative booklet, "This Is Mill Valley", originally published in 1948.

The vast majority of workers in Mill Valley find their work elsewhere, thus the area is particularly sensitive to economic conditions in nearby employment centers. In Mill Valley itself there is no industry, its major source of employment being those commercial establishments servicing the community.

Living costs - food, gas, electricity - are higher here than elsewhere in the Bay Area. There is some unemployment in the Valley, largely among those formerly working in the shipyards. Banks are becoming more selective in making personal loans. Collections are becoming more difficult to make. Some people are not getting enough to live on.

There is growing dissatisfaction in Mill Valley today. A dissatisfaction that has no immediate outlet. The services supplied by the city are often inadequate, but the administration is admittedly doing everything that can be expected of it in a tight money situation. Some new source of life and income is needed for the city, in the estimation of some. If this means industry, others recall the blight that has occurred elsewhere with the introduction of factories and strongly oppose any such movement. This is especially true of the older inhabitants. But the need for stability and for more services remains unanswered.

the government

The government of the city is almost literally working around the clock in an effort to adequately serve the community. If present conditions continue for much longer, it is doubtful if they can maintain their present high standards of performance.

Salaries may be rated "fair", considering the size of the community. Detriments exist, however, to the attraction and retention of qualified young people for the city staff. These deterrents are 1.) the long hours necessitated by the understaffing of several of the city departments and 2.) the lack of an adequate pension system for city employees. The operation of both factors will result, inevitably, in a future lowering of the standard of performance.

In active departments (e.g. Public Works) personnel is hard pressed merely to keep pace with current demands, is rarely able to reduce backlog, and scarcely dares to think of the future. Without proper staffing and expansion, this condition will be further aggravated in the future. When this occurs, the city will be hard put to retain its public servants.

Mill Valley is the first city in Marin County to initiate complete county assessment and tax collection of property within the city. Although many complain of the tax rate, it would not seem to be too high. Indeed, the current reduction of the city rate by \$.15 from \$1.60 per \$100 valuation (at 75% of actual value) to \$1.40 may be questioned when one realizes the vast amount of public work that should be undertaken. Adjusted city and county tax rates give a net rate of \$3.34 per \$100 valuation at 100% valuation. Veteran's exemptions are the major item in property exemptions that amount to almost 1/10th of the \$9,774,945 worth of property subject to the local tax rate. These exemptions in the face of rising financial need, present a most serious problem.

Adequate parking is desired for the central business district. In order to provide this, money will be needed. The school district would like to expand its facilities in the city, but this requires more land - and that land is removed from the city tax roll. Again we have the dichotomy - citizens desiring more service with lower costs.

What do the facts mean? If the present purely residential character is maintained and adequate services are to be provided, then special taxes will necessarily continue to grow. If Mill Valley residents desire additional services without increases in home taxation, they shall have to resolve the dichotomy.

What will be the future course for Mill Valley?

Appendix A
Major Sources of Information

Mr. George Aiassa, acting City Manager and City Clerk, Mill Valley
Mrs. Mary Gilkey, Marin Co. Planning Dept.
Leonard Almcraantz, Director of Public Works, M.V.
Police Chief McGowan, Mill Valley Police Dept.
County Sheriff Gleason
State Highway Patrol, San Rafael office
Fire Chief Armager, Mill Valley Fire Dept.
Mrs. Thomas, Librarian
Dr. Clarice Haylett, County Health Officer
Miss Phyllis Hecker, County Health Educator and Statistician
Walter Van Dyke, Superintendent, Tamalpais Union H.S. District
Roy Laugesen, Superintendent of Schools, M.V. School District
William Cass, Mill Valley "Record"
Donald Baxter, Mill Valley "Record"
Miss oth, Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Falley, City Hall
John McSweeney, Postmaster, Mill Valley Post Office
Mr. Forman, P.G. & E.
Mr. Clow, County Road Commissioner
Mr. Kindred, Assistant Manager, American Trust Co.
George Jones, County Clerk

Marin Municipal Water District
Pacific Tel. & Tel.
County Sanitation Department
Mill Valley "Record"
Marin County Records Office
U.S. Bureau of the Census
California Taxpayers Assoc.

Mill Valley Area Comprehensive Community Development Plan 1950-75,
Ted B. Adsit

Public Health Reports, California State Health Dept.

Hospital Care Program for Marin Hospital District, Marin County, Calif.
James A Hamilton & Assoc. July 1947

Marin County Ordinances # 264 and # 463 (Zoning Ordinances)

Mill Valley Ordinance #348

Report on Proposed Elementary School Sites in Mill Valley School District to Serve Marin Valley and Contiguous Area
Marin County Planning Dept.

Mill Valley Community 1949, Report on Annexation of Fringe Areas

This is Mill Valley, League of Woman Voters, 1948

Annual Report of Financial Transactions of Municipalities and Counties of California for the years 1940-48, Thomas H. Kuchel, State Controller

Final County Budget, County of Marin, California, 1947-50,
Leon A. Delisle, County Auditor

Tax Levy for the County of Marin for Fiscal Year 1949-50,
Leon Delisle, County Auditor

San Francisco, the Bay and it's Cities, Writers program of the Works Projects Administration in Northern California, 1947

Master Recreation Plan, Marin County, California, Marin County Planning Comm.

Triennial Report, Marin County Planning Commission, 1947

Inverness Plans for the Future, City Planning Graduate Student Report
University of California, Spring, 1949

San Francisco and Marin County Schedule, Grayhound Bus Co.

Mill Valley Tax Reports for years 1939-40 through 1948-49.

Appendix B

Proposed improvements to the water system in the Mill Valley Area are as follows:

Cascade Canyons: New 8" pipes - increased volume and pressure

Blithedale: 8" pipe - 200,000 gal. tank

Tamalpais Valley: 10" pipe - 500,000 gal. tank

Appendix C

There is a Tamalpais Valley Fire District (rate \$.30 per 100 assessed valuation) which has one piece of equipment. Homestead and Alto have volunteer systems with 2 and 1 pieces of equipment respectively. Supplementary service is offered to the unincorporated areas by the Marin County Fire Department from its station at Woodacre. The station, however is primarily equipped to combat brush and forest fires.

Appendix D

Enrollment in Tamalpais Union High School District

<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1935-36	1162	1943-44	1175
36-37	1176	44-45	1184
37-38	1239	45-46	1177
38-39	1278	46-47	1255
39-40	1224	47-48	1368
40-41	1189	48-49	1633
41-42	1230	49-50 March	1640
42-43	1301		

Annual Estimates - 1950-57

1950-51	1779
51-52	1846
52-53	2031
53-54	2256
54-55	2441
55-56	2659
56-57	3068

The district has an assessed valuation of \$43,504,161 and a tax rate of \$1.16 per \$100 of assessed valuation. For 1949-50 it was apportioned \$473,967.21 by the State and received \$1,442 for vocational training programs.

Appendix D (Cont.)

Mill Valley School District:

	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Pupils - April 1950</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
Alto School	kg-8	346	11
Homestead School	kg-4	186	6
Tamalpais Park	kg-8	583	18
Old Mill School	kg-8	375	10
		<u>1490</u>	<u>45</u>

Enrollment in the district for the period 1939-50

1939-40	July 1-June 30	670
40-41		693
41-42		708
42-43		802
43-44		857
44-45		1018
45-46		1016
46-47		1138
47-48		1220
48-49		1337
49-50	March	1489

Estimated School Population - 1950-56

1950-51	1577
51-52	1739
52-53	1861
53-54	1977
54-55	2077
55-56	2057

The school district has an assessed valuation of \$10,562,870 and a tax rate of \$1.25. Funds apportioned by the state amount to \$164,614.

Appendix E

Health Protection

The Marin County Health Department is responsible for the health protection services in the Mill Valley area.

Services include:

1. Communicable disease control
2. Maternal and child health care
3. Health education
4. Laboratory facilities
5. Sanitation control
6. Maintenance of Public Health Records

Appendix E (continued)

The Mill Valley School District has contracted with the county Health Department, at \$3500 per year, for the services of one nurse for the school health program and the part time services of a doctor, dentist, and an educator. Through the close cooperation of the health department and the school district staff, a program for school health services, education and school environment has been developed. For several days each year, X-Ray services are provided by the Marin County Tuberculosis Association.

Although statistics are not available, it is the opinion of the County Health Department that vital indices would indicate the maternal and infant mortality rates are very low and that the contagious disease problem is normal.

Appendix F

The annual accident rate in Mill Valley follows:

1941	79
1942	79
1943	61
1944	62
1945	93
1946	118
1947	126
1948	129
1949	156

The accidents are predominantly of a minor nature, one death resulting in the last 14 years, and occur mostly in the central shopping area. Outside of the central area there is no consistency in the pattern of accident location. At present statistics as to specific location of accidents and injuries are not available.

Parking in the central shopping area is critical, being most acute on Saturday mornings. The need for increased parking facilities has been expressed by the Citizen's Parking Committee and the City Planning Commission in a joint report. The creation of two free parking lots was recommended. One site proposed was behind the city hall and the other on the present roadside adjacent to the Northwestern Pacific Freight shed, this last requiring the removal of the shed. 72 new parking spaces would thus be made available.

Appendix G

Rates for Open Advertising in San Rafael Independent, Mill Valley Record:

San Rafael Ind. :\$1.25 per inch, non-contract
 \$.65 per inch, lowest contract
Mill Valley Record: \$.85 per inch, non-contract
 \$.50 per inch, lowest contract

Appendix H

Mill Valley Building Permits (Not including Utilities)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cost of Const.</u>	<u>No. of Permits</u>
1949	\$ 818,139	261
1948	929,477	288
1947	1,222,068 *	289
1946	827,686.54	312
1945	650,379	328
1944	207,561.50	167
1943	281,146	174
1942	190,875	140
1941	359,992	224
1940	292,188	205

(* Includes \$285,000
Telephone Bldg.)

Appendix I

Population Estimates for Mill Valley: (And Neighboring Communities)

Post Office Estimates - March 1950

Tam. Valley -	1100 -	350 Homes
Homestead -	1200 -	-
Almonte -	400 -	-
Alto -	500 -	130 "
Mill Valley -	7250 -	-
	<u>10,450</u>	

Estimates from City Tax Reports for Mill Valley alone:

1940	4847 Census
41	5000 Est.
42	5200 "
43	6300 "
44	6818 Reg. Voters - 3457
45	6119 Federal Census, June 11, 1945
46	6119
47	7000 Est.
48	8000 "
49	8000 "

Appendix J

Property Exemptions, Property Subject to Local Tax Rate and Yearly Tax Rate.

<u>Years</u> <u>(ending</u> <u>in)</u>	<u>Exemption Value</u>	<u>Value of Prop.</u> <u>Subject to Local Tax</u>	<u>Yearly Tax Rate</u>
1940	\$ 196,700	\$5,412,891	\$1.25
1941	201,400	5,654,976	1.25
1942	206,200	5,869,896	1.25
1943	190,650	6,003,659	1.125
1944	203,600	6,809,138	1.125
1945	223,125	7,026,624	1.125
1946	333,150	7,864,636	1.40
1947	468,130	8,531,545	1.40

<u>Appendix J (Cont.)</u>			
<u>Years</u>	<u>Exemption Value</u>	<u>Value of Prop.</u>	<u>Nearly Tax Rate</u>
1948	\$ 953,400	\$8,909,870	\$1.60
1949	961,050 *	9,774,945	1.45

* There are 663 Veteran's Exemptions for 1949

As a sixth class city, Mill Valley is limited to a maximum basic rate of 1.00 per hundred dollar assessed valuation.

Bonds Outstanding - June 30, 1949

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Date Issued</u>	<u>Amount Outstanding</u>
City Hall	1935	\$17,000
Country Club	1938	50,000
Sewer Plant A	1946	185,000
Sewer Plant B	1947	145,000

Source: City Tax Reports

Appendix K

Amount of Commercial Development: 15.7 Acres - Approx. 1.5 per thousand population.

Appendix L

Administrative Salaries for Mill Valley:

City Manager - \$6600 per an.
Treasurer - 50 per mo.
Attorney - 250 " "
Asst. City Clerk - 330 per mo.
Physical Dir. - 4800 per annum
Public Works Dir. - 4800 per annum (Including compensation as Street Director)
Fire Chief - 4320 per annum
Chief of Police - 4320 per annum

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